

# via paciis

*The voice of the Des Moines Catholic Worker community*

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## Take Mass Civil Disobedience to Stop Iowa Bakken Oil Pipeline

***Letter writing, legislating, and litigating won't be enough to get the job done—not by half. We have to stand up and fight back.***

*By David Goodner*

*“Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the Lord your God has given you - Deuteronomy 16:20*

*And I gave man a plentiful land, to enjoy its fruits and its good things. But he defiled it and made my heritage an abomination - Jeremiah 2:7*

*Jesus preached, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near,” - Matthew 4:1*

*There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilence. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven - Luke 21:11*

*For behold, I create new heavens and a new Earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind - Isaiah 65:17*

Unless we do something about it, catastrophic, man-made climate change is probably going to end the world as we know it, very possibly within our lifetimes, and almost certainly within the lifetimes of our children and our

grandchildren. There's no sense sugar coating it, or beating around the bush. If we dig up, drill, and frack all of the fossil fuels left in the ground and burn them up into the atmosphere, the planet will no longer be capable of sustaining plant and animal life, including our own.

We have already passed enough tipping points that climate change will continue for decades even if we shut off every spigot and pump in the world today (as we must still surely do). Some feedback loops may be irreversible.

Even those of us who have accepted the inconvenient truth about this grim reality tend to underestimate how late the hour really is, and how fast global warming will begin to take incalculable tolls on society.

The poor will suffer the most, as they always have, but no one is safe from the approaching storm.

***“If the facts meant anything, we wouldn't be here in the first place.”***

The cause of catastrophic, man-made climate change is obvious and well-known, but as former priest and Des Moines Catholic Worker founder Frank Cordaro is fond of saying,

***“If the facts meant anything, we wouldn't be in this mess in the first place.”***

The world we live in has been organized in fantastic ways by corporate power and consumer capitalism, and no amount of scientific journal articles, facts, stories, or studies will compel the beast to stop its relentless destruction. There is money to be made after all, lots of it, and the capitalist economic system is incapable of taking long-range consequences and external costs into its calculus.

Neither will a solution to climate change be found in some miraculous new technology, like artificial carbon capture, geo-engineering, genetically modified food, or even massive wind and solar farms. Our over-reliance on technology, developed, centralized, See Iowa Bakken Oil Pipeline on pg. 3



Catholic Workers block traffic at a Winona frack sand washing and processing facility on April 29, 2013



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THE DES MOINES CATHOLIC WORKER COMMUNITY

*The Des Moines Catholic Worker Community, founded in 1976, is a response to the Gospel call to compassionate action as summarized by the Catholic Worker tradition.*  
*We are committed to a simple, nonviolent lifestyle as we live and work among the poor. We directly serve others by opening the Dingman House as a drop-in center for those in need of food, clothing, toiletries, use of a phone, toilet, shower, or just a cup of coffee and conversation. We also engage in activities that advocate social justice.*

BECOMING A DES MOINES CATHOLIC WORKER

We are open to new community members. For information about joining our mission, contact any community member or visit our website: [www.dmcatholicworker.org](http://www.dmcatholicworker.org).

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Patrick Stall, Gil Landolt, Bill Petsche  
Live-in guest: Edir Perez Mayo

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Frank Cordaro  
Live-in resident: Bob Cook  
Live-in guest: Thomas Pohlmeier

RACHEL CORRIE HOUSE

1301 8th St.  
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515-330-2172  
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Julie Brown, Aaron Jorgensen-Briggs, Bryan Morrissey

CHELSEA MANNING HOUSE

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Des Moines, IA 50314  
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Ed Bloomer, Jack Petsche, David Goodner, Emily Sinnwell,  
Emiliano Herrera

WEEKLY LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY

Mondays, 7:00 pm. Berrigan House.  
Call to confirm.

MONTHLY VETERANS  
FOR PEACE MEETING

Berrigan House. For more information,  
contact Gil Landolt at [peacevet@hotmail.com](mailto:peacevet@hotmail.com)  
or call 515-333-2180.

WEEKLY AA MEETING

Fridays, 5:00 pm, Berrigan house

THE CHIAPAS PROJECT

Chiapas, Mexico  
Richard Flamer  
[flamerrichard@hotmail.com](mailto:flamerrichard@hotmail.com)  
*As for ourselves, we must be meek, bear injustice, malice, and rash judgment. We must turn the other cheek, give up our cloak, go a second mile.*  
*-Dorothy Day*



Frank Cordaro’s Reports From 6-month Walkabout

Frank Cordaro has taken a 6-month leave of absence from the Des Moines Catholic Worker to go on walkabout with his girlfriend, and former DMCW community member, Jessica Reznicek. The following is a link to his reports from the road: <http://bit.ly/1GcooS5>

Two Poems By Jimmie L. Lewis

I Made It This Far

I’ve made it this far, and  
I’m a keep going on  
It’s nothing you can tell  
or say to me, because I’m  
going home  
Up in heaven with my creator  
is where I belong  
Just be grateful, don’t act out  
or sing sad songs I’m Better  
Than Life, because where I’m  
going I belong  
And don’t worry I will call  
you on my spiritual phone  
I’ll keep in touch with you  
all the time, understand I won’t  
leave you alone  
But you do have to realize  
that I’m not here  
anymore and I’m gone  
Hello just keep growing and  
being strong  
To every keep living  
you may live long  
Always remember I made it  
this far, and I’m a keep going on.

—In the Best Blessed Long Memory of  
Grandma H. Hartley 2015

Hello

Hello, waking up early  
what’s the time  
I thank you lord  
God said son what’s on your mind  
I’ve been doing your will lord  
Forgive me Father for crying  
Some just don’t understand  
because they are spiritually blind  
They don’t have time to study the word  
lay back chill, and just unwind  
Meaning sit down meditate  
understand the Word, because  
you’re on God’s Time  
hear in your ear, the words  
that God led, and guide me to rhyme  
I’m not living wrong or rough  
I’m doing fantastic, great, and  
I’m just fine  
do you understand excuse me  
“Hello” you’re on God’s Time  
So say your prayers daily  
Take your time don’t rush  
take it slow, because when you’re  
talking to God “Believe Me” you’ll  
feel the power “Hello”



# Iowa Bakken Oil Pipeline

Continued from pg. 1

and controlled by corporate power for one reason and one reason only, to increase profits, is a big part of the problem. We are not above nature, and industry and technology only serve to alienate us from the natural world we are a part of.

To survive, the only real recourse we now have as a species is to humble ourselves, adapt, and re-commit to building the resilient, beloved community. But institutionalized systems of domination and structural violence stand in our way, and they will do everything in their power to prevent real change from happening. They will not give up power willingly, only when they must because of massive and sustained pressure from below.

In order to bring enough mass democratic force to bear to successfully take the power back, we must be willing to follow in Jesus’ radical footsteps and speak truth, bear witness, organize street processions into the heart of Empire, enter the sacred temples of economic and political power, and throw the managers and the money-changers out on their butts. We have to shut down business as usual and raise hell. This course of action will inevitably lead some of us to the cross, or at least to jail, but with catastrophic climate change on the horizon, civilization is headed for crucifixion anyway. We have nothing to lose but our chains.

Here in Iowa a commitment to biblical justice in defense of the people and the planet can, and has, taken many forms. No effort is too small and every act is worthy of respect and appreciation. But none of our other good work will mean anything if we do not actually physically stop the machine from devouring what is left of our air, land, and water.

The Iowa Bakken oil pipeline, also known as the Dakota Access pipeline, proposed by the Fortune 500 corporation Transfer Energy Partners and its subsidiaries, would transport as much as 575,000 barrels of explosive crude oil a day from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota through South Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois before being shipped by rail to the East Coast and Gulf of Mexico for refinement and export.

The construction of the pipeline could negatively impact thousands of acres of pristine Iowa farmland and the risk of future oil spills and potential water pollution after the pipeline is built is very high. Although Big Oil companies, and, unfortunately, some sectors of the organized labor movement, believe that the exploitation of natural resources in North Dakota will lead to jobs and economic growth, the truth is that most of the remaining reserves of oil in North America and the rest of the world absolutely have to remain in the ground if we are to have even a chance at warding off the impending Apocalypse.

That’s why stopping the Iowa Bakken oil pipeline is so important, both practically and symbolically. And it’s why we have to go “all in” to achieve our goal.

There are already some signs that a spirited grassroots resistance movement is growing in Iowa among family farmers and everyday people from all walks of life. A coalition of organizations and many other unorganized Iowans have successfully demonstrated significant public opposition to the proposed project.

But the movement is not yet broad enough or deep enough to escalate and sustain the kind of fight that is truly necessary in order to win. The Bakken Pipeline Resistance Coalition’s efforts are admirable and should be unequivocally supported, but so far, they haven’t been nearly enough—not by half. The largest and most powerful community organization in the coalition has, for months, pursued a so-called “light lift” strategy and remains unwilling to put their full weight and influence into the fight. This has resulted in hundreds of potential new pipeline fighters across rural Iowa being left on the sidelines without being properly organized.

The coalition has also been much too focused on pursuing alleged legal and legislative remedies, good enough for kicking up a little bit of dust maybe, but bound to fail absent a tougher strategy, as well as nebulous and unquantifiable “public education” efforts in lieu of real corporate and political ass kicking.



Rick Perry

Real resistance is born in deeds, not words, and to date there has not been nearly enough attention placed on organizing the kinds of mass mobilizations and confrontational direct actions that are necessary to throw a giant monkey wrench into Big Oil’s long-term agenda.

This moderate approach to tackling the issue has to change, and fast. Across the continent, real resistance to the Earth-wrecking ball of capitalist industry has largely taken the form of confrontational civil disobedience targeting the hydraulic fracturing (hydrofracking) of natural gas and crude oil at the extraction sites themselves, as well as by blockading and disrupting the rail and pipeline transportation infrastructure.

These campaigns have not only been principled, disciplined, and in-your-face. They have also been highly effective. The national climate action movement has used mass civil disobedience protests to exert considerable grassroots pressure on the system’s corporate, legal, and political institutions, and the movement has succeeded in slowing down and delaying several construction projects like the Keystone XL pipeline, as well as countless smaller mines, railroads and pipelines, as a result.

The burgeoning national movement has been mostly well-led by some powerful players like Bill McKibben and 350.org, who have embraced and even normal-



Terry Branstad

ized some forms of entry-level civil disobedience to great effect. But it has also involved dozens of smaller, decentralized groups and organizations working on the frontlines in their home communities, fighting hard day-in and day-out for what’s right, usually without a lot of money, resources, or publicity.

Because of these joint efforts, in the last few years, hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets in protest marches and demonstrations, including thousands and thousands more who have taken arrests and gone to jail for engaging in sit-ins, blockades, occupations, sabotage and property destruction.

If we are to live up to the challenge that the best of the national climate action movement has laid out in front of us, if we are equally as serious about stopping the Iowa Bakken oil pipeline from being built, then we must be willing to build the same kind of mass resistance right here at home that has worked so well across the rest of the country.

Holding public meetings and press conferences, submitting formal objections with the Iowa Utilities Board, writing letters to decision-makers, filing motions in court, these tactics all have their place, to be sure. But in a fight this big they are only truly useful if they are part of a broader campaign of escalation to engage, train, and mobilize more and more people to get involved and to take the kinds of disruptive, confrontational actions that can actually change the political calculus on the ground and make the Bakken oil pipeline too cost prohibitive to build.

Decision-makers like Iowa Governor Terry Branstad and GOP presidential candidate Rick Perry—who now sits on the board of the company trying to build the Iowa pipeline—simply will not, under any normal circumstances, act against the interests of Big Oil money, certainly not just because a few hundred people show up to testify at a public hearing organized by the state. Nor will a handful of cite and release, simple misdemeanor charges from a small group of the usual Catholic Worker suspects work any better. Neither of these examples exemplifies real dissent, only going through the motions. We have to be willing to aim higher if we want to win.

The other question is, what happens when, as is likely, absent a massive and sustained uprising, state government regulators ultimately approve the necessary permits and paperwork and the project moves forward into the construction phase? Will we applaud ourselves for putting up the good fight, generating some newspaper headlines and dragging a few corporate names into the mud—and then just pack up and go home?

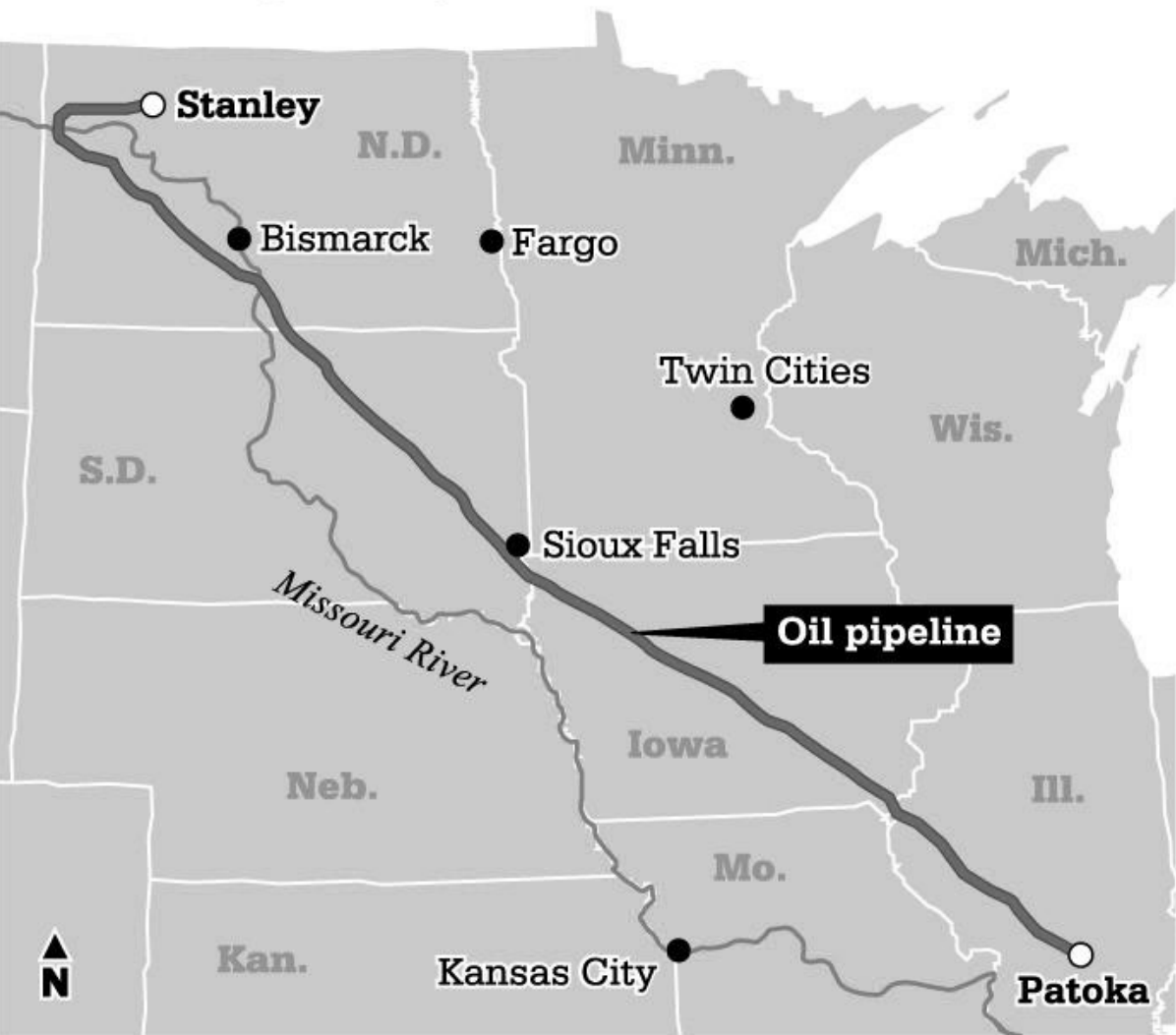
Or will flood the farms with a sea of people, put our bodies between the bulldozers and the barns, and loudly proclaim that we will not go quietly into the dark night?

We know what Jesus would do. The only question is, what will we do? The time to act is now.

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## Biggest in the Bakken

The proposed 1,100-mile Bakken Pipeline would be the largest crude oil pipeline originating in North Dakota. Energy Transfer Partners says the \$3.7 billion project could be completed by the end of 2016.







Vito Andolie

# Holy One

By Vito Andolie

I love the number one, the most holy and spiritual number in all that exists. In some cases, many numbers go back to one or some will say in all cases! Many members come together to form one family or clan. Man joins woman to become one flesh, one mother, one father, one life, one soul. Days make one week, that makes one month, that makes one year. One nose, one mouth, one set of eyes, arms, legs and feet makes one body. One earth, truly one ocean, one people, for all people are one race, that of which is the human race. One first time for everything, and one last. One sun and one moon. One me, one you, one us, one sky, one night and one day. And when this one life, which contains our one soul, that rests in our one body, goes back into our one mother which is one earth, returns to one god. It shall, it will be your one self.

# Knowledge of a King

By Vito Andolie

I am King Vito. Many people may sit and laugh at that name, saying he calls himself a King yet he has no Kingdom. So let me start this by explaining a simple thing. The Earth is my mother, I am her son and she is my birthright. I or no other man can sell what is rightfully everybody’s. Giving to each and every man that is born does the mother belong to, so who can sell land, for not everyone is in agreement on this thing. I and not anyone else I know want to any meeting in all of exists to sell our mother like some begotten slave. I say more she is my Kingdom as well as yours, making us all Kings and Queens on this planet, this land, this earth. He who takes the earth takes the stars also, what greater evil can be done than this? The father, the creator of all things, gave us the earth to share as a birthright, and look towards the Bible, Genesis 27, what greater foolishness than to sell a blessing being your birthright. Awake we must before it be said of us in the future, what greater fools in any generation than they who sold the birthright. It would have been the same as if they sold their souls. So when you see me remember, we are that which is royal, only we understand one another.

# Israel-Palestine: A Two World Religion Problem and a “Which God Do We Serve” Confusion

By Frank Cordaro

The issue driving the Israel-Palestine conflict will not be resolved with a one- or two-state solution. It is a much larger and deeper issue than the current political conflict. It’s a two world religions issue and both are confused by a “which God to serve?” problem. The world religions are Christianity and Judaism, and they share the most god-awful history, ending in WWII.

Today’s Christians and Jews live in an entirely opposite geopolitical space than when they started, yet the confusion with which God to serve is a very old issue, at the heart of each tradition.

Christianity’s and Judaism’s shared history beings with shared origins in the Bible. Most people wrongly believe that today’s Judaism is the older of the two faiths. However both traditions are people of the book, the Bible. Both lay claim to the same biblical text, what Christians call the Old Testament. The writing of the text of both traditions, including the New Testament, ended by 120 A.D. And both claimed to be the rightful heirs of the Abrahamic covenant found in the Old Testament.

Both traditions started at the same time and place in history, in the 1st century, during the Roman occupation of Palestine. And both traditions started competing with each other only after the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and its temple in 70 A.D. In the aftermath of 70 A.D., both traditions had to reinvent themselves without a divine possession of any one land, city, temple or nation.

In 120 A.D., after the last word was written that made it in the Bible, Judaism was by far the largest and most significant tradition of the two. Estimates of how many diaspora Jews existed in the Roman Empire at the time range from 1 to 10 %. Whatever percentage of the Empire the diaspora Jews were, they were players in the Empire’s political domain. They were enough of a factor that the post Second Temple diaspora Jews from 70 A.D. on had to continue paying what had been their yearly Temple tax to the Roman Emperor after the Temple was destroyed. Those we call Christians, who wrote the New Testament, were so insignificant in numbers and in influence in 120 A.D. that they had zero play in the Roman Empire.



This all changed by the 300’s with Emperor Constantine. And in this post-Constantine era, Christians became the dominant religion of the Roman Empire, of Europe and the rest of the world. Politically, economically and socially, Christians started living the exact opposite way of life that Jesus and the early first and second century followers of Jesus lived and proclaimed in the New Testament.

Through the centuries Christians eventually were more likely to be a force behind the crucifers in the world than among the crucified. And by the end of WWII, Christians had become the best killers in the world. We killed each other very well and we kill others event better. This has not changed since WWII.

And the relationship between Christians and Jews from Constantine to the end of WWII in 1945 is nothing but god-awful! In this post-Constantine era, Judaism became the lesser of the two sibling world religions and over the centuries Jews became perennial objects of scorn, rejection, persecution and death at the hands of Christians and Christian nations. The worst of this shared history culminated in the Nazi’s killing of 6 million Jews during WWII. Today in this post-WWII era, Christians and Jews live in an entirely different world. These days, it would be difficult to separate the two world religions given our god-awful shared history and the demographic facts in which both U.S. Christians and Jews find themselves.

Today’s demographic facts speak louder than any words. There are 2 billion Christians in the world and 14 million Jews. Eighty percent of all Jews live in the U.S. or Israel. And the population of the U.S. makes up less than 6% of the world’s population. Israel’s population is insignificant percentage-wise, a lot less than 1%.

Given these demographics, the issue driving the Israel-Palestine conflict is

really an issue of bad faith practiced by U.S. Christians and Jews alike.

Everybody living in the U.S. today was born into a society and culture of privilege, entitlement and ill-gotten gains won in the victory of WWII, which comes with being an empire. And like all empires, ours is built on lies from a false God who justifies war, killing, oppressions of all kinds and the ill-gotten wealth and power of the few over the many. U.S. Christians and Jews alike suffer the same crises of faith. Both are confused by the question of which God do they really serve—the God driving the U.S. Empire or the God of the Old Testament prophets and the radical Rabbi Jesus, the God of Creation? \*

And even though the historical, political and economic settings for both traditions are vastly different than they were in the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., both are up against the same challenge of faith, the challenge of giving their allegiance to the God of Creation in resistance to the established God of Empire. In the 1st and 2nd centuries, the latter were the pagan Gods, with their “Son of God” Caesars of the Roman Empire. In the 21st century, we have the Christian-Jewish false God that serves the interests of the U.S. Empire.

\*See “Come Out, My People!”: God’s Call Out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond by Wes Howard-Brook



# Offutt Air Force Base Feast of the Holy Innocents witness: an annual tradition

By Frank Cordaro

This year’s Dec. 28 Feast of the Holy Innocents witness at Offutt AFB marked the 35th year we’ve been doing this observance. We picked up on the tradition from the folks at Jonah House who take their annual witness to the Pentigon. At first it was called the Strategic Air Command (SAC), the command headquarters for all our strategic nuclear weapons systems and nuclear war planning. In 1992, the site morphed into the **Strategic Command (STRATCOM)** now charged with space operations (such as military satellites), information operations (such as information warfare), missile defense, global command and control, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, global strike and strategic deterrence (the United States nuclear arsenal), and combatting weapons of mass destruction. Which means it got a whole lot more dangerous and god-awful than just being the command of our strategic nuclear weapons systems!

This year we broke into double digits with ten good souls gathering at Offutt’s main gate were we prayerfully read and reflected on the Gospel text of Mat-thew’s 2nd chapter and the story of the killing of the innocents. Our message through the years has remained very simple, our banners say it best:

Herod killed the Infants  
STRATCOM would kill the World  
Celebrate Christmas  
Shut Down STRATCOM

Along with a photo from this year’s observance we are also adding a photo from our first observance in 1979.



(LtoR) Mark Welsch - Nebraskans For Peace, Jessica Reznicek - a rolling stone, Jerry Ebner - Omaha CW, Al Viola - Omaha, Frank Cordaro - DMCW, Dagmar Hoxsie - Yankton CW, Mike Sprong - Yankton CW, and Mark Kenney - Omaha. Photo taken by Denney Davis – Burbank, SD.



Dec. 28, 1979: Blocking S.A.C. Headquarters Entrance. (LtoR) Roger Carol, Father Paul Kabat, Barb Hoelzer, Father Jim Dubert, Leighton Berryhill, Peter DeMott, and Frank Cordaro Photo from DMCW archives.





Bobby Terry is a fierce cribbage opponent at Dingman House.



Regular volunteer and artist extraordinaire Charlie Mertes sketches Emily at Dingman House.



Des Moines Catholic Worker Bill Petsche plays with knives in the kitchen at Dingman House.



Des Moines Catholic Workers with volunteers at Dingman House.





Bob Cook with Eva Alejandra Trejo de Cook on their wedding day, March 4, 2015.



Des Moines Catholic Worker Emilano Herrera helps serve at Dingman House.



Frankie Hughes, former Des Moines Catholic Worker with Julie Brown and Aaron Jorgensen-Briggs at East High School Love Rally (Westborough Baptist Church counter-protest) on January 26, 2015.



David Goodner on the porch at Berrigan House.



# Report from the Chiapas Project

By Richard Flamer

It has been seven years since I last wrote about the Chiapas Project for *via pacis*.

For those not familiar with our work, my wife, Araceli Benitez Moya, a Zapotec woman, and I live on a small farm we call “Casa de Camillo Torres” (named for what I like to think of as the first clerical victim of Vatican II).

Our farm of just under six acres is mostly woodland covered with pines and oaks lying just over 7000 feet in altitude. Over the last six years we have built a large wood shop, a house and, of late, a small laboratory for Araceli and her cooperative to mix, cook and make organic soaps, shampoos, oils, lotions, balms and traditional native medicines. Unfinished is a large structure which we hope to finish and rent out to delegations, students from the U.S. and religious workers here on retreat.

We raise rabbits for meat, chickens for eggs and a large assortment of vegetables, herbs, flowers and medicinal plants. Over the last year we have added worms for our organic fertilizer, which is mostly used for the 100-plus fruit trees I planted after clearing out the underbrush and scrub from the woodlands.

We deem ourselves “Catholic Workers” though in deference to the Mexican Government we don’t do much in the way of active resistance since the government can expel any foreigners for interfering in politics. Araceli, meanwhile, is not in a position to become a U.S. citizen though she does have a visitor’s visa now (after 5 years of applications) allowing her to come to the U.S. for short visits. According to the rules of immigration, should she decide to become a U.S. citizen she has to reside in the U.S. continuously for two years, which, for the both of us, is unacceptable.

We work with our neighbors in matters civic. Araceli was elected head of the school committee four years back and has accomplished much. Her first year she

got the Secretary of Education for the State of Chiapas to build two new classrooms for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades. Her second year, she started the process of getting the land deeded with a group of repatriated refugees at the behest of my friend Pedro. The group had returned to their lands after the Civil War had ended and after some had spent 12 to 15 years in a refugee camp in Mexico (where, coincidentally, I had worked as a photographer in the early 1990’s). I went to Yalambajoch to assess a carpentry shop and lumber mill, the tools for which had been donated by an NGO from Switzerland. The larger problem, from my perspective, was a lack of human resources. That is, the men of the village who were carpenters, plumbers, and tradesmen had been massacred at the site years earlier.

I have made arrangements for an NGO from San Cristobal to start training some of the younger people and managed to raise funds sufficient to buy a transformer for the wood shop so that some of the tools can be used after two young men can come over to San Cristobal to get trained on the basic tools. Along with my friends from the local NGO we have visited and made arrangements with the head of the school in Yalambajoch to have two or three of her graduates come in the summer for a full two-year course in not only carpentry but basic use of a computer, drawing and design, with the hopes that the graduates will return to their village to work in the shop.

Tony Murland and his family live in England where they run a small auction house for antique tools. Along with the auction business Tony haunts the second-hand stores and volunteers at a kind of “Salvation Army” conglomerate where he sorts tools and gathers a basic group of hand tools in sets which are gathered for shipment onto



Guatemalan refugee camp (Photo by Richard Flamer)

pallets. The bulk of the tools are sent to Africa for schools but since our meeting of some years back he has finally sent me a pallet of hammers, saws, rules, squares and levels. The tools are to be sent to Houston (to Casa Juan Diego, run by Mark and Louise Zwick). Now I need to figure out how to get them to Yalambajoch in Guatemala. My plan is to split the load between my friend Christian Szinc who runs Sueninos where they have a carpentry school and Yalambajoch where they hope to start training young people.

I have also been working with Don Peschke, publisher of August Home Publishing and owner of The Woodsmith Stores in Des Moines. In the past Mr. Peschke has been quite generous in donating new machine tools to us here at the Casa de Camillo Torres. When I get back to Des Moines I hope to speak with him about the tools needed at Yalambajoch as well.

Finally, I hope to travel with Araceli to the U.S. in late March or April to Wisconsin, Iowa and Nebraska. I have some work as an electrician lined up in Newton,

Iowa with an earlier appearance in Milwaukee. For over 18 years in Central America and Mexico I took photos, sometimes as a stringer for agencies, mostly for my own selfish reasons. When younger, I thought if the world could only see the results of war I might make a slight difference by taking photos of the refugees, of the massacres, of the mass graves. I didn’t change the world but I did get some good photos along the way. All of those black and white negatives and slides have been donated to Marquette University where I hope to visit and get started on cataloguing the works. While there I hope to stay with an activist friend, Bob Graf, and his wife. We hope that Araceli can find classes for her English, as well.

I would be remiss if I did not mention my spiritual base at Holy Family Catholic Church in Omaha. It is a small church doing great things. Sometimes in turmoil, always with just a small base of perhaps fifty families who serve the inner city, each time I return to Omaha I am relieved to attend Mass and visit with old friends.

Who knows what kind of a future we have, but we have been blessed. Our work with the poor continues, and we are both more faithful than ever. Saludos de Chiapas. P.S. We have a website in transition that is located at [thechiapasproject.com](http://thechiapasproject.com) ... Or, we can be reached via email at [flamerrichard@hotmail.com](mailto:flamerrichard@hotmail.com). Checks can be sent to Holy Family Catholic Church, 1715 Izard Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102 in the name of The Chiapas Project.

## A Love Story

By Bob Cook

Only the Spirit of the Living God knew for sure what my first trip to El Salvador would mean for the rest of my mortal life. It began one day in the heat of July 1990. I was writing promotional materials for what was known as the Rural Harvest Offering, a hunger offering of the Des Moines Presbytery. In 1990, half of that offering was destined for the dirt-floor-home community El Tablon located in the mountains of eastern El Salvador in the pueblo of Berlin, Usulután. The creative journalism well was dry. I tried over and over to begin the narrative that would describe the poverty of a community caught in a civil war fought for the rights of land, education, employment and medical care. My mind wandered to consider a trip to see firsthand the reality of such poverty and that was when my eyes caught the phone number of SHARE Foundation, an organization dedicated to helping the poor of El Salvador organize for dignity and human rights. I called that number and after a conversation with GiGi Grunke, a staff person in their office in Washington, D.C., a plan had been hatched for me to travel to El Salvador in November of that year. I would join in the commemoration of the first anniversary of the martyrdom of six Jesuit professors, their

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Nurse Emily Sinnwell (DMCW) and some of her patients in Chiapas, Mexico. (Photo by Richard Flamer)



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housekeeper and her daughter. After that I would be taken to El Tablon to live and observe the poverty of the community for 16 days, 13 of them without a translator. That is right. I did not speak or understand Spanish, the language spoken in El Salvador.

Those 16 days of my 28-day trip to El Salvador taught me more about poverty than I ever wanted to know. I witnessed the kind of poverty that brings silent sobs in the night. Bloated stomachs and violence of war made me sad and homesick. I wanted to go home, but the Spirit of the Living God wanted me to witness that which I had come to learn, third-world poverty. It broke my heart and made the lives of the poor of El Salvador a focus of my life so I would never forget them or their condition of poverty the likes of which I had never experienced before. The passing of each day lived out in the middle of their civil war brought me closer and closer to knowing I would never forget the people of El Salvador and more, I would do whatever I could to make justice happen in their lives.

Each year from my first trip in 1990 to 2000 I visited El Salvador. At first the focus of my trips then the delegations I took was on the canton El Tablon, the site of my first visit in 1990. Then the priest, Fr. Protasio Villataro who served the Parish of Berlin invited me to come live with them to get to know the entire mountainside of the Berlin municipality that included 17 cantons like the dirt-floor-community El Tablon. From August 1994 to July 1995 I lived at the Parish of St. Joseph and learned the lives of the poor of the countryside. It was an education that ensured a future of living among the people of Berlin from 2001 to 2007. In that time I served as Des Moines Presbytery’s designated missionary to El Salvador that developed into “Our Sister Parish Mission,” and is known as the same today. To know more about that mission you can visit the webpage [www.oursisterparish.org](http://www.oursisterparish.org).

Though I retired as missionary for our sister parish mission in 2006, I could not forget the poverty the people of El Salvador. I sent monthly support to a select group of five families I came to call my own. I no longer have the resources to continue that support. But another person claims my attention now and it is to her I give not only the resources that I can but also my heart. We will be married March 4<sup>th</sup> in San Salvador. So I will begin married life with one I love, one who became the woman I said over and over for 15 years since my divorce “there is not a woman in the Universe who would live with me, let alone me with them.” Eva Alejandra is that woman.

I met her some seven years ago at a social function in San Salvador. From the first sight of her, I knew she would be THE woman who interested me, but she was much younger than me and I never dreamed she would become the woman I said would never exist. On several occasions when I made trips to El Salvador over the years I saw Eva Alejandra and always I was taken by her caring heart and beautiful presence. I always wanted our conversations to continue, but the end would come and I would think about her for a while until memory faded and I got on with my life.

Last November, at the end of the Great March for Climate Action, which I had participated in for about 1400 miles across the U.S., I made a trip to El Salvador to let those families I had supported monthly for several years know I no longer had the resources to do so. The Spirit of the Living God who had put me on the path that took me to El Salvador touched me again 25 years later. This time it was to let me know Eva Alejandra did not care about the years between us. Through a mutual friend I learned of her interest and went to see her at the instruction of our friend. I asked her to dinner, but later that day she called me to say she could not go because her mother had a cyst caused by diabetes and she wanted to care for her. She did so not knowing if it would be a deal-breaker in



Angel Ariel de Cook



Eva Alejandra Trejo de Cook, six months old, with Aurora Gabriel de Cook

my eyes. What it did was to confirm the loving and caring heart I had perceived and so I said “how about tomorrow?” The rest is history. Well, almost. There are her children and her mother. Angel Ariel is will be three years old April 26<sup>th</sup>. Aurora Gabriel will be one year old July 3<sup>rd</sup>. And her mother, Milagro, comes as part of the deal because she needs care due to her diabetes.

Eva Alejandra, whose full name is Maria Eva Alejandra Trejo Ventura (she said don’t call her Maria because she does not much care for the name and besides no one asked her when she was born about the name) and I will be married in El Salvador on March 4<sup>th</sup>. In the eyes of our culture it is not rational because of our age difference. But this is a love story and love is not rational. And, it confirms what I learned years ago from Bill Grace at the Center for Urban Encounter in Minneapolis, “*There are no absolutes.*” With luck we will have a visa for them by the fall and she and the children will come to Iowa at Christmas time, and her mother too if she is feeling well. So let that be a lesson to anyone who thinks they walk their faith journey alone. The Spirit of the Living God is always nearby and if you find something in your journey of great value and seek it in your life, so you may be the recipient of a great gift, as I did with the love of Eva Alejandra.

To echo the words of Forrest in the movie *Forrest Gump*, “that’s all I have to say about that,” for the time being anyway. Peace be with you.

# My Friend Charlie

By Jack Petsche

There are few real necessities in life. Among those are food to keep our bellies full, drink to keep us hydrated, shelter to stave off the cold of night and clothes to mitigate the cyclical harshness of Iowa winters. Here at the Catholic Worker oftentimes we’re able to help our guests with some of those essentials. But what many people don’t realize is that our guests give us one of the most fundamental needs in life: friendship. I’m blessed to know that five days a week, I’m surrounded by my friends, our guests, many of whom I’ve known for over 15 years.

Day in and day out, as I lay my head down to end the night within the warm confines of a home, I remember that many of our guests know no such comfort. It makes me realize that many people living in the empire that we call America feel burdened by the tribulations of everyday life, from the mortgage payment to watching how much high-fructose corn syrup they ingest on a daily basis, and without trivializing other people’s first-world problems, a person must

remember that our guests are faced with different questions when they start their day, such as where is their next meal going to come from, and where are they going to find shelter when the harshness of Iowa winter descends upon them. These are the most basic needs, and many of us forget that, in this day and age where our daily news cycles are inundated with hot button news issues such as did one football team gain an unfair advantage by using under-inflated footballs, there are real problems that if left unanswered, end in our guests ability to survive.

But with all of those burdens weighting on the minds of our guests, I’m in awe that they are still able to smile, to laugh, to play cards, watch football and still maintain some modicum of happiness, while much of society goes about their day without even a second thought of the struggle that is going on in many inner cities around the country. It’s amazing that they don’t lash out at the governmental structure that has forgotten their interests, and left them behind. It’s awe inspiring that even as they struggle to deal with the harsh realities that many in our society face, they are able rise every morning and start anew and hope that if they persist things will change.

One of our guests who I’ve known for many years and am proud to call my friend is Charlie Dodson. I remember Charlie since I was a kid; he’s been coming around the worker for over 20 years. He epitomizes the resilience that I see in our guests on a daily basis. Even while he continues to deal with the many struggles he faces, he still manages to brighten our day with a smile and always has a kind word for everyone around him. In all the years I’ve known him I’ve never really gotten to know his background but I knew, as with many of our guests, he’d faced much adversity. So I sat down with Charlie, and we discussed his life and the struggles he’s faced that have left him homeless.

Charlie was born right here in Des Moines at Mercy hospital, just a stone’s throw away from the Catholic Worker. Like many others in impoverished neighborhoods, a single mother, who bore the sole responsibility of raising Charlie and his siblings due to his father’s alcoholism, raised him. When talking about his mother Sharon, Charlie alternates between smiling as he remembers the great memories of his mother, and sadness at the thought of her no longer being around.

Beginning at the age of 13, Charlie experienced his first health problems in the form of a mild heart attack. He also started experimenting with drugs and alcohol around the same time, and began a

lifetime of dealing with addiction. He believes his addiction is one of the main causes of a lifetime of struggling to make ends meet, committing non-violent crimes to fuel his addiction and ending up incarcerated. Each time he’s been released from the Iowa penal system, he is left with very few tools to thrive in a society that really has no avenue for a convicted felon to find adequate employment and housing.

Though He has been clean from alcohol and drugs for years now, he still struggles with continuing health problems and homelessness. It’s an endless vicious cycle for Charlie. Many days he doesn’t know where his next meal is going to come from, or where he’s going to sleep. Sometimes he is able to sleep by the river in a tent, other times he really has no viable option to find a place that’s not below freezing to make it through the night. Things that we take for granted, like showering and cooking food are almost impossible to do while being homeless.

This has been a reality for Charlie for almost 20 years off and on. He never makes any excuses for his circumstances and oftentimes takes more blame for his troubles than you could imagine, but instead of being angry at our society, he tells me about the instances that random strangers have bought him a meal or given him a kind word and how Charlie and others in his position, do the best they can to watch out for each other, and how in 20 years of living on the streets he’s never felt afraid or in danger. I have the impression that somehow through all his adversity, Charlie believes in the compassion and goodness of humanity. And by seeing Charlie’s resolve I can’t help but smile a little more, believe a little more in the good of the individual and think that at some point we will live in a society where our goal is not just about accruing wealth but about spreading kindness and compassion and eradicating state-sanctioned suffering.



Charlie Dodson



# Friday in Palestine

By Julie Brown

My first time in the Palestinian village of Ni’lin was an experience I will never forget. Four internationals, including my Catholic Worker housemate Aaron, and I set out from Ramallah one Friday morning. After missing the only morning transport, we negotiated a fair price for the four of us to be driven by a local driver on an “off the books” trip to the small village where a Friday demonstration was to happen. We sat and listened to the sounds of Arabic music being pumped out of speakers blown so bad they sounded more like coffee cans as the driver quickly sped us along a series of twisty and rocky mountainous roads.

It was early still in the morning and the sun shone beautifully on the honey and almond colored soil. We passed silver groves of olive trees and fields of trellised grapes still lying dormant in the cool January air. After going through several small villages the taxi driver came to a stop in the center of what he assured us was the town of Ni’lin. We exited the van and there we stood armed with only our cameras and a phone number for a young man named Saeed.

After calling our contact number we sat and waited on top of a stone wall near a gas station for him to arrive. Several small shops lined the street across from us but most of them were closed due to Friday being a holy day. As we waited, a middle-aged man approached us with a lop-sided face, droopy eye, and big awkward smile. He spoke little English and we spoke no Arabic, however, it was obvious by his mannerisms and exaggerated movements that he was in some way developmentally different. We smiled, shook hands many times and showed him our cameras as we waited. Several people passed and snickered but it was quite pleasant to have someone to share the time with. Suddenly, a small car zoomed up with rocks flying and came to a dusty stop beside us as the driver said “get in.” We said our good-byes to our street-side companion and piled into a small car.

A dark haired young man in his early twenties introduced himself as Saeed Amireh. He spoke very good English and had a kind and friendly face. Saeed told us that the man we had just been talking to had been shot in the eye by Israeli soldiers years earlier. The bullet left his face deformed and his brain permanently damaged. That was very sobering to hear just before the demonstration we were about to attend.

Saeed took us to his home and led us into the courtyard in back. There we found an old indoor couch and a couple of chairs to sit on under a canopy of fruit trees. There was also a large bird coop with several fat white birds hooting and cooing and a water well in the middle of the small courtyard. Saeed’s mother brought us out tea as I watched the bird coop. There were a couple of birds hopping along the roof and hanging on the chicken wire sides trying to get back into the cage while many more on the inside were poking their beaks through gaps trying to find a way out. As I watched the birds it somehow seemed the wrong time for thinking of things in metaphors. It was then that Saeed proceeded to tell us about his life in the village of Ni’lin.

He started by describing how the land had been confiscated and colonized by five illegal Israeli settlements. Then the apartheid wall was built in 2008 taking most of their remaining land and a checkpoint was placed at the entrance of the village making the town of Ni’lin surrounded and cut off. As the wall was being built, the town, including many of the elders in his own family, formed a popular committee and started to organize a nonviolent movement against the theft of Ni’lin’s land. This included weekly demonstrations against the wall. It was during this time that he and several of his family members including his uncle and father were imprisoned.

He told stories about soldiers raiding the village at night and putting its citizens under house arrest for days at a time. After four or five days, people would try to leave their homes and Israeli snipers would shoot them in the streets with live ammunition. The villagers continued to leave their homes as an act of resistance and went to protests at the wall,



Saeed Amireh with his birds

eventually resulting in the breaking of the home blockades. I remember Saeed describing a system they had for alerting the town of raids while the young men would go out and build roadblocks trying to prevent Israeli soldiers from invading the town in the middle of the night. As the demonstrations continued, the brutal tactics of the occupation forces increased in attempt to squelch the resistance. Many people were shot and killed along with scores of villagers being imprisoned.

Through all of this, the then teenage Saeed used the Internet including programs like Google Translate to teach himself English as a way to reach the world in attempts to raise enough money to have his father and other leaders of the committee released from prison. He also believed it was crucial to be able to communicate to the rest of the world about what was happening in Ni’lin. To do this, he needed to learn to speak and write in English. He started to record and blog about the events his town and the condition its people were going through. We sat in the courtyard for nearly an hour listening to things that were incomprehensible to my white, middle-class brain. Then he looked at his phone and announced that it was time to go. We all piled back into his compact car and he drove down a road that lead into a large cactus field filled with what I call “prickly pears.” He said that this area of their land is forbidden for them to enter by an Israeli military order so they choose this spot in their field to pray just before the demonstration. It was yet another act of nonviolent resistance.

We waited on the road as around fifty men congregated under a grove of olive trees to pray. This was one of those sights that will be burned in my mind forever. I was filled with the anxiety of what was soon to come but the men in the olive grove seemed calm and serene as they bowed, knelt and then touched their foreheads to their land.

All at once the prayers were over. Saeed came to say that he would see us after the demonstration and faded into the crowd of chanting villagers. We all walked down the road and as we peaked a small hill there we were standing in front of the massive wall. Just on the other side we could see a large settlement with its new red-roofed Western-looking houses.

The protest split into two groups as we went down the hillside. The four of us internationals stayed together and surveyed the situation. I had never been to this particular town, however, I had been to many Friday demonstrations in The West Bank a year earlier. It started with sound bombs being thrown from Israeli soldiers onto the Palestinian side of the wall and young men began to throw stones back at them. Quickly the first tear gas canister was shot into the crowd of demonstrators and many soon followed. Aaron and I had teamed up and were trying to get used to the wind patterns so we could stay clear of the gas while also taking photographs.

Tear gas is a tricky thing. When you are close to it, it’s thick and toxic yet very visible. If you are quick on your feet, you can just step aside a foot or two and not be affected at all. The further you are away, it is not as thick but becomes invisible and hard to avoid. In the end, it still all changes with every gust of wind. I found myself trying to find a compromise between distance from the gas, my own nerve, and still being able to document the events with my camera.

All of a sudden we heard loud shouting from the other side of the hill. Our team made a split-second decision that Aaron and I would be the ones to investigate. We ran along the ridge of the hill in the direction of the other half of the demonstrators. As we got near I could see Saeed and a couple of other men carrying someone away from the wall. As we got closer others joined in rushing the man toward an ambulance that was just arriving. I noticed that the man being carried and Saeed were covered in bright red blood. The man he was carrying had a fresh gunshot wound and was bleeding from his leg. As if on autopilot I took photos while walking beside the group. Some of the men shouted “Live ammo” or “bullet” and pointed so that there would be no mistaking what I was documenting. Everything happened very quickly after that. Within minutes the leaders called the demonstration off. It was too dangerous to risk other injuries and there would always be next Friday, we were told. We recently learned the man who had been shot was kidnapped by undercover Israeli Special Forces in July. He spent six months in prison.

This was the first demonstration Aaron had been to in Palestine and even though I had seen someone shot the year before, I had never been so close. What seemed like an eternity must have just been seconds really before he was evacuated. Aaron and I were both shaken and the rest of the events of that day I can’t seem to recall. Somehow, we got home. I’m not sure if we went back to Saeed’s house or not.

I did have a chance to see Saeed several more times after that. In fact, the next time I saw him, we spoke about his friend who was shot. The Israeli military came to his friend’s house to arrest him for throwing stones that day even after he was shot but he had gone into hiding. Saeed said that his friend could not give himself up yet because his gunshot wound was still so fresh and they will not take care of his leg in the Israeli prisons. The military had threatened to arrest his family and the whole situation sounded ghastly to me. It was then that Saeed showed me his own scars from bullet

wounds and jokingly said that he had felt bad for his friend so he gave him two of his fat white birds from the cage in the back yard.

Saeed continues to be a leading voice in hopes of spreading the word about the events in his village of Ni’lin. He continues to document and raise awareness around the world about the deplorable and brutal conditions that they live in under the siege of the Israeli military. He has spoken in many countries and has been nominated for several International Awards including two from Amnesty International. At his young age of twenty-three he has seen more than most Americans will ever see. He hasn’t gone to a war zone, he was born into one. He has never known one day without war and yet he has such a genuine love for life. Saeed has already been on speaking tours in close to a dozen countries, and it is Saeed’s wish to come next to America to speak about life in the Occupied West Bank. I also feel that this is the place that his message needs heard the most. If you have a way to help make this happen, please contact me at The Des Moines Catholic Worker.



Palestinian protestor shot by live ammunition at nonviolent demonstration in Ni’lin in January 2014

## Apartheid and the Neoliberal City

By Patrick Stall

The legacy of the modern city is the slum. While the middle and upper classes of urban strata now enjoy an unprecedented standard of living, an incredible one third of the urban population now live in spaces of utter metropolitan indigence. This division is not coincidental but is imperative to the capitalist system of production. Just as the uneven and combined development of global capitalism produces systems of dependence and inequality on the world scale, the spread of global capital necessarily engenders social stratification and inter-class violence in the city.

In their book Antipode, urban sociologists Breinner and Theodore explain that the point of neoliberal urban policy is to “...mobilize city space as an arena for market-oriented economic growth and for elite consumption practices.” This means a restructuring of urban space to accommodate changes in the global labor market (note the shift toward a service economy in the US and the expansion of export industry in the developing world) and to promote consumerism. City planning becomes the laboratory of neoliberal policy reform, resulting in the creation of “environment built for consumption” that facilitates consumerism and the growth of the service economy concomitant with the criminalization and repression of those excluded from the neoliberal order.

Here in Des Moines, this division is reified in the City’s ruthless attempt to evict the homeless from their living spaces along the river and destroy their

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dwellings. Though the City Council sees fit to continuously update the Downtown and West Village infrastructure and increase the police budget year after year, it cannot find a dime to build new shelters to replace the overcrowded buildings it now has.

The systems of dependence created by global capital, by which a core of economically developed countries prosper at the expense of the underdeveloped periphery, thus manifest themselves also in the modern city. The privatization of urban space creates two cities: one for the modern middle to upper-class consumer, and one for the rest of us, to whom global capitalism has been less kind. New forms of apartheid take shape in the neoliberal city: gated communities, complete with a fully privatized infrastructure, separate those who can afford them from new slums where a third of the world's urbanites live in abject poverty, where unemployment and economic hardship is the norm, where the state appears only as an Orwellian array of surveillance systems and a repressive police presence.

These distinct and interrelated forms of urban living coexist in surprising proximity, and sometimes even appear on the same section of city street, as in the case of New York's Morningside Heights and Harlem. Morningside Heights is home to Columbia University and a mainly white, upper-middle class population and sits one city block away from the west border of Harlem, a black working class neighborhood and America's quintessential ghetto. Morningside Heights boasts broad avenues and wide pedestrian pavilions clearly meant to facilitate consumption, while across Morningside Avenue, a mere city block away, uncollected garbage litters the street, ubiquitous surveillance cameras study pedestrians' every move, and the police presence appears as a foreign occupation, complete with mobile watchtowers, checkpoints, and 'random' searches.

New York's experience is far from unique. Cities in England are experimenting with cruel spiked windowsills and highway overpasses to prevent sleeping, and Des Moines Police are now arresting people for using coffee shop wireless networks on the street downtown. Everywhere neoliberal policy reforms are instituted, new walls and slums appear. Considering the hegemony of neoliberal ideology and the imminent explosion of urban population, we must envisage a dystopian future for the city: the most radical change to the urban landscape of tomorrow will be the class segregation of global capital.

# Humility

By Josh Brown

*"Humility is the acceptance of the possibility that someone else can teach you something you do not already know, especially about yourself."* –Arthur Deikman

It has been a joy in my life over the past couple years to volunteer with the Des Moines Catholic Worker community. When my daughter Julie became a Catholic Worker three years ago, I became very interested in this chapter in her life. I saw my daughter blossom as a woman with a strong voice fighting injustice on all levels. I too was drawn to this work at a deeper level. I have enjoyed cooking and serving brothers and sisters who have passed through the doors of the Dingman House for a couple of years.

It wasn't long after I started volunteering before those that I was serving a meal began serving me. Serving me up lessons of life. My assumptions are challenged often.

I believe that by empathizing with all people, relating to each other as equal-to-equal, our society can change drastically and social injustices have the possibility to be eradicated. Through volunteering at the Catholic Worker I have an opportunity to share a meal and many good conversations and to create a bond with people of all walks of life.

Growing up in large family of modest means I learned early on that a way of nurturing family could be done though preparing a meal made with love. I feel blessed to be able to cook using healthy ingredients. I always attempt to prepare something different with a belief that variety is a spice of life. There are two ingredients that get placed on the distribution shelf in the foyer en masse that don't seem popular: jellied cranberry sauce and canned pumpkin. It has become a challenge to find a delicious way to incorporate these underused foods. My pumpkin cake with cream cheese frosting and barbecue sauce with cranberries have become a hit. The advent of an unexpected early winter with severely low temperatures caught the pantry of the Dingman House unprepared. The needs of those living outside always require extra consideration. There were no blankets to hand out and few warm coats.

I put the call out through social media to a local group of Prime Timers of which I am a member. Many had not heard of the Catholic Worker. Several members searched through their closets and within a few days carloads of blankets and unused coats became useful again.

Many of our group members enjoy the fact that their contribution to

those in need would not generate a financial gain for a middleman. There are lots of ways to plug in. Saving hygiene items from nights spent in hotels during vacation doesn't cost a cent but can meet a need. My colleagues at work are now collecting grocery sacks and reusable food containers which are always a need. This simple act can serve a twofold purpose. Recycling saves our impact on the planet as well. Spreading the message of the work that is done at the Catholic Worker is the simplest but most powerful way to providing service I believe.

We are fortunate to live in a generous community. Tapping into those who can easily share is a joy when the results are actualized. I have become grateful to work alongside of a community of stewards who devote their lives to this important work. The challenges of those daily walking the walk of service do not go unnoticed. Caring for the caregiver is important in all areas of service. I have enjoyed building a history with those dedicated to this service and checking in with each time our paths cross.

I would encourage all reading this to find a way to volunteer; I believe that your efforts will pay you back threefold. I will leave you with a favorite quote by Helen Keller:

*I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.*



Josh Brown

# Norman's Whereabouts

By Norman Searah

Hello there! There's been a lot of bad weather, a lot more extreme in some parts like Buffalo, New York. I recall as a young kid in New Hampshire outside of town we got

three feet of snow and thought it was a lot. I guess a lot of people are not used to driving on icy and snowy roads and highways. Before Christmas I took a trip to New York City to see an old friend I thought was dying. He was OK; he lost a lot of weight from his mild stroke. Somewhat like my mother had.

My sister now owns the house we lived in, and is caring for mother. The family is split and I was told not to come home unless I want a fight, which they know I don't. All I can do is to pray about it

Since all of this extreme weather I've been reading two books that might be of interest to you. One is called *Climate Shift* by The Media Source. It's all about the extreme weather and its impact on our planet.

And the other is from the National Geographic, it's called *Extreme Weather: A Survival Guide*. Both are good books and their ideas might help you and others since the weather is becoming extreme.

I'm thinking about another friend, named Tuna, who died. He was a native born Indian. At the same time, I'm thinking of a lady named Debbie Dogskin. She was 63 years old, a northern Sioux from the Northern plains. She froze to death because she had no heat in her mobile home. I am thinking of gathering some clothes, even some of mine, and some from a second hand store, and taking nothing from the Catholic Worker house.

If I call myself a child of mother earth maybe I can do something in memory of Tuna, Debbie, and former Catholic Worker, Jamie, who died of a bad liver. The Pow-Wows were good; Howard Crow Eagle was a good escort to Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations along with Wounded Knee and other places.

Besides writing this article I've been listening to Bob Dylan vs. Pete Seeger, who died last January at 94.

I've also been listening to Woody Guthrie who was born in Oklahoma in 1912. Back in Oklahoma and elsewhere the dust started to create storms of dust, called The Dust Bowl Days. People died of dust, nothing grew, animals died. Woody had to give up his paintbrush for a guitar. He started singing first to California where a lot of farmers and other people from Oklahoma and other states were looking for work and a place to live.

While back in Oklahoma some people were working the land to see what worked, I guess that's when they found the Ogallala Aquifer. It runs from the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations all the way to the northern part of the Texas panhandle.

I'm happy and sad that the farm in California after three or four years of drought found an aquifer under the ground there. I'm sorry for the state of Washington having a hard time with heavy rains, flooding and deaths. I'm sorry for the real cold and snowy weather with car pile-ups like the one on highway 80 here in Iowa.

I thought I was done, but I recall a news story that got me interested. Texas and other states are having earthquakes. The kids and teachers in Texas are doing what kids and teachers used to do in the 50's and 60's: duck under their desks.

I'm sorry for the harm we do to our mother earth, our home, which feeds us, clothes us much like our mother. We do a lot of harm to her and don't think much about it. Remember the old Native American proverb:

*"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."*



Norman Searah



City bulldozer destroying a homeless person's campsite



Des Moines Catholic Worker  
*via pacis*  
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Des Moines, IA 50305

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PERMIT NO.  
371

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Prayers . . . without them, nothing happens.

### VOLUNTEERS:

Individuals and work crews for hospitality (serving food, cleanup), cleaning and general inside and outside maintenance . . . without them, we burn out.

### FOOD:

Fruit, Vegetables, Meat and Fish, Milk, Cheese, Salted Butter, Olive Oil, Sugar, Coffee, Creamer, Juice (sugar free), Salt, Black Pepper, Fresh Garlic, Salad dressing, Soups and Stews (both canned and fresh). Leftovers from weddings, funerals and other social gatherings . . .

### HEALTH AND HYGIENE:

Feminine Hygiene Items, Diapers, Baby Formula, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Multivitamins, Antibiotic Ointment, Band-Aids, Lip balm

### TOILETRIES:

Disposable Razors, Shaving Cream, Shampoo, Conditioner, Lotion, Deodorant, Soap, Toothpaste. (Small sizes preferred for handout. . .) Toothbrushes and Toilet Paper.

### NEEDED CLOTHING:

Underwear, Socks, T-shirts, Sweatshirts, Hoodies, Coats, Work Pants. (All Sizes—especially big . . .) Sleeping Bags, Blankets

### HOUSEHOLD

#### SUPPLIES:

Bleach, Laundry Detergent, Environmentally-Friendly Dish Soap, Murphy's Oil Soap, Pinesol, Trash Bags, Brooms, Rugs, Candles, Energy-Efficient Light Bulbs, Aluminum Foil, Plastic Wrap, Sandwich and Freezer Bags,

Bath Towels, Playing Cards, Candles

### HOUSE REPAIRS:

With four old houses, there are plenty of projects large and small. We invite do-it-yourselfers—individuals or groups—with skills in carpentry, plumbing, painting, electrical, etc. to come in, look over our housing needs, and choose a project. Bring your own tools if possible.

### LIBRARY:

Peace and Justice books for the Berrigan House Library

### \$CASH MONEY\$:

Cash donations are essential to pay our property taxes, utilities, repair and maintenance of property, upkeep and gas for two vans, purchase of needed supplies, our community gardening

and for the continued publication and mailing of the *via pacis*, a good 20% of our annual expenses.

## DMCW WEBSITE

For up to date news & info on the community, the Rachel Corrie Project, Berrigan House and Occupy the World Food Prize visit the DMCW web page: [www.dmcatholic-worker.org](http://www.dmcatholic-worker.org).

# via pacis

*The voice of the Des Moines Catholic Worker community*

APRIL 2015

[WWW.DMCATHOLICWORKER.ORG](http://WWW.DMCATHOLICWORKER.ORG)

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